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From the President's Office

Dear Friend:

We're just starting to see the new and expanded IRS Forms 990 for 2008 trickling in to GuideStar. As of the end of August, we have about 30,000 now available on our free Web site.

We expect new 990s will come in at a slower pace than usual this year. We are hearing frequent reports from auditing firms and nonprofit organizations that this first-year effort at completing the new Form 990 has been difficult, very expensive, and time-consuming for most. It also appears likely that more nonprofits than usual will be requesting extensions this year in order to have more time to work through the details.

As you know, GuideStar's position on the Form 990 has evolved over the years. We like the 990 because all organizations of a certain size are required to file it—under penalty of law—and it is a public document. That helps promote transparency and accountability and gives the general public a chance to learn about nonprofit practice. But we also find some 990 data inaccurate or hard to understand, not timely, and not always as comprehensive as we would like. ... [Read more >](#)

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Are There Easy Ways to Reduce Donor Attrition Rates?

Today, losing donors has special urgency because more and more organizations are struggling to acquire new donors. Response rates are down exactly at a time when paper and postage costs keep climbing. Your organization may also be facing sharp drops in giving from major donors who have taken a beating in the stock market. Every donor you lose—no matter at what giving level—creates more financial instability for your organization. Put positively, increasing the loyalty of your donors produces huge benefits. ... [Read more >](#)

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Why Don't Boards Do What They're Supposed to Do?

"Why don't board members do what they're supposed to do?" shouted a packed room of nonprofit organization leaders. This quick, loud response came when the training-session participants were asked to share their most pressing problem. The unified reaction, with heads nodding in agreement, set off an energetic buzz throughout the audience. Obviously a red-hot issue had been identified! ... [Read more >](#)

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Stories of Smart (and Not-So-Smart) Grantseeking in a Tough Economy

Working smart is a familiar expression. Grantseeking smart is one of mine. Recently, three different nonprofit agencies asked for my advice on three different issues that illustrate some of the pitfalls (and opportunities) in raising grant funds in today's turbulent economy. As one who promotes storytelling as an effective way to inform, entertain, and persuade (particularly in grant proposals), I'd like to share these stories with you. ... [Read more >](#)

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Your RFP Process: The Groundwork for a Successful Relationship

For nonprofit executives, requesting proposals for professional services can be a bit like writing and monitoring an on-line dating profile. If you don't capture your organization's needs and values with succinctness and specificity, you may find yourself facing a choice between the wrong suitors. And when it comes to audit and tax needs, taking yourself out of the dating pool is not an option—you must ultimately choose one fish in the sea. When embarking on the RFP process, leaders should strive to get off on the right foot. ... [Read more >](#)

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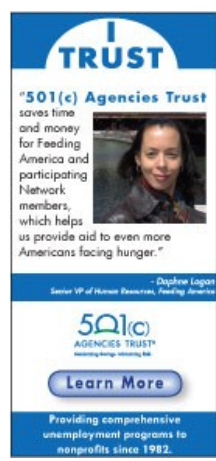
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IRS Provides Procedures for Supporting Organizations to Change Public Charity Classification

On August 10, the IRS published Announcement 2009-62 which provides procedures for supporting organizations to request a change in their public charity classification. In response to the Pension Protection Act of 2006 which changed the tax laws with respect to supporting organizations described in section 509(a)(3), the IRS published Announcement 2006-93 to provide procedures for supporting organizations to request reclassification as public charities under section 509(a)(1) or section 509(a)(2). ...

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This Month's Webinars

- Sept. 23—Customizable GuideStar Data. Register now >
- Sept. 30—IRS Form 990: Governance. Register now >
- Sept. 30—Strengthening Your Fundraising Appeals: Powerful Giving Season Communications during a Downturn. Register now >

[See the 2009 Webinar calendar >](#)

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Top Cancer-Fighting Nonprofits

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• The Elephant Sanctuary has earned \$11,000! *Featured in the NY Times, CNN, ABC News, Fortune and Oprah Magazine!*

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